



Urban Rivers Restoration Pilot Fact Sheet Fourche Creek Watershed Restoration Arkansas

Background - The Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission in their 1992 County Ecological Assessment identified the Fourche Creek basin for its “great value to catch, store and release floodwater from the Little Rock area”. With the City’s growth, the watershed’s ability to function to benefit the environment has been impaired. Encroaching urban sprawl has reduced the watershed’s ability to reduce non-point source pollution. Waste and trash have polluted the landscape and produced leachate (toxic seepage from waste sites). Sediment has clogged stream channels and choked vegetation. Fish and populations of other aquatic species have been harmed by the accelerated amounts of point and non-point source pollution. Fourche Creek has a large drainage basin or watershed of 108,800 acres, which provides drainage for most of the City of Little Rock, and its 3,600 acres of bottomlands supports hardwood forests critical to filtering and cleaning runoff. The Creek flows generally from west to east into the Arkansas River.

Current Activities - A partnership of local, State, Federal agencies and non-profit groups have been collaborating on restoring an urban natural area along Fourche Creek. Participants in the project include the City of Little Rock, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, the Audubon Society, Pulaski County, Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department.

Authorization and Funding - Work is anticipated to be done under Section 1135, Project Modifications for Improvement of the Environment, Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (PL 99-662), as amended. The Little Rock District is preparing a Limited Re-Evaluation Report to update the original studies on the acquisition of 1,750 acres of bottomland covered with hardwoods along the

creek for environmental preservation and development of nature appreciation facilities.

A portion of Fourche Creek is located within the Pulaski County Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot, as well as within a Federally designated HUD/USDA Empowerment Zone. Both of these programs encourage reuse and redevelopment of abandoned properties and promote sustainable growth practices.

The Future - Over time, Little Rock will boast an improved and protected urban bottomland hardwood natural area that will restore wetland functions and reduce flooding, educate the public on ecosystem systems, include wildlife and aquatic habitat enhancement, public access, and nature and canoeing trails.



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